**Communicative Language Teaching**

In a regular fourth-grade classroom, ELLs and mainstream English-speaking students make up the class, which is taught by Ms. Williams, a monolingual English-speaking teacher. Some of the ELLs speak Spanish or Vietnamese. Their proficiency levels vary. These fourth graders are learning about structures such as more, less, most, and least. In the past week, the students have been learning to use multiplication to solve real-life problems and learning about the basic food groups and their nutritional values. Ms. Williams plans to incorporate the mathematical concepts in her language arts lesson, which centers on the topic of food and nutrition.

Today the teacher has brought in a diagram of the food pyramid, picture cards of food, and some food labels. She wants the students to figure out their daily food intake and to create a balanced food plan for one day. Ms. Williams begins the discussion by activating the students' background knowledge of everything they have eaten the day before. She asks them to look at their logs for the information they have recorded. As students reply, she lists their words on the board and sounds them out loud. She also pastes pictures of foods that are listed on the whiteboard. She then asks students to count the number of servings they have eaten for each food. They are asked to find a partner and ask questions such as, "Did you eat more sweets than vegetables?" or "Did you eat less meat than fruit?" "What did you eat the most/least?" Students are asked to reply by saying: "I ate more X than Y," "I ate less X than Y," or "I ate X."

Next, she shows them the food pyramid chart and talks about the different food groups and the amount of servings for each group. The teacher says, "Last week, we learned that there are certain types of foods we should eat a lot of every day and foods we should eat less of. Can anyone tell me which food should we eat more of?” Isabelle answers “Rice, we must eat more rice." Ms. Williams replies, "Yes, you're right, Isabelle." Felipe raises his hand, "Apple," and he points to pictures of fruits on the board. Ms. Williams sounds the words aloud for Felipe. She then points to the food pyramid chart and asks, "What food group do apples and bananas belong to, Felipe?" Felipe answers, "Fruit." Victor jumps in and says, "Meats." Ms. Williams retorts, "Do we need more meat than vegetables?" Victor responds, "No, more vegetables than meats. My father say meat is no good-they got many chemical inside their bodies and is no good for us," Ms. Williams responds, "Victor, I believe you are quite right. Yes, many farm animals are given hormones to make them grow faster and bigger. What do you think class?" Discussion continues and Ms. Williams praises the students for their answers.

Ms. Williams continues to ask students for the name of the food group of the items they mentioned and discusses why they need different amounts of each. Then Ms. Williams passes out food labels to each pair of students. She asks the pair to state the amount of servings they would have if the food is eaten and if it exceeds the recommended daily servings. Next she asks, "Teng, if we need 3 to 5 servings of vegetables each day, how much should we eat each week?" Teng answers, "3 times 7 and 5 times 7, so we need about 21 to 35 servings each week," Ms. Williams says, "Nice job, Teng. You're a math whiz!" She then asks the class if there is another way to express the same idea. One student says, "We must eat 21 to 35 servings every week." "Yes," says the teacher. Ms, Williams gives similar math problems for other students to answer and asks students to rephrase their statements.

Next, Ms. Williams breaks the students into small groups with mixed levels of English proficiency. She asks them to create a balanced food plan for one day and gives each group a pyramid chart to fill in their information. She asks the less-proficient students to draw the pictures of food they select on their pyramid chart. She selects the more-proficient students to report orally to class the following information:

a. Foods they should eat more or less of

b. The number of servings of each food in their food plan

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Think about the following questions:

.:. What are the goals of language learning, in this class?

.:. What areas of language are emphasized?

.:. Are students being drilled the language structures they need to learn?

.:. What is the role of content in language learning?

.:. What are students expected to do?

.:. What types of materials are used?

.:. How did the teacher use the materials to teach the structures?

.:. Are the students learning real-life language?

.:. What skills are they acquiring? Are they required to use these skills?

.:. How does the teacher respond to inaccuracies in language?